

A WALK THROUGH JAPANTOWN — 1935



Post Street between Laguna and Buchanan streets, circa 1940



Post Street between Laguna and Buchanan streets, Dec. 1988

INTRODUCTION

The most often discussed period of Japanese American history is the World War II experience. While the impact of the internment was tremendous, it has tended to overshadow other aspects of Nikkei history that are equally worthy of study.

In this issue, we will examine the thriving Japantown community that existed in San Francisco during the '30s — a Japantown much larger and with a greater variety of businesses than the one today.

The following account is one of a number of Japanese American materials collected as part of the Survey of Ethnic Minorities in the San Francisco Bay Area in the 1930s. The survey was administered by Dr. Paul Radin.

Hokubei Mainichi staff members and others have checked the article for accuracy and made minor revisions.

The writer promised Japantown residents that their names would not appear in the survey, hence the use of initials. The Hokubei has added some of the names with the permission of the individuals' families.

Names of businesses were also frequently omitted from the original text. The Hokubei has added the names whenever possible.

GEARY STREET

The "Japanese Town" in San Francisco starts at (Laguna and) Geary Street. (Moving west on the south side of Geary Street) we begin with the China Chop Suey shop owned and run by a Chinese.

Next door is the Dupont Co., a grocery store run by a Mrs. W., a widow, and her son, dealing in Japanese goods and delivering to all parts of the city. This is because the Japanese are very much scattered throughout the city, and customers prefer to order by phone, finding it inconvenient and impossible to shop personally in Japan Town.

Upstairs, there is a Buddhist Church, which has only a small congregation, but which is nevertheless a temple of worship.

A Chinese laundry occupies the adjacent property, together with a small shoe repair shop (Tani Shoe Shop, owned by Dairgoro Tani), one of three run by a Japanese.

Next is a row of small cottages, part of a rooming house owned by the proprietor of a store which deals in jewelry and in dry goods (Zaiman Co.). The proprietor, Mr. Z., is a well-known citizen. He has six children, all of whom are grown up now and have left home to work. A few are married.

His small business, catering both to local people and to visitors, is kept going because of the length of time it has been in business — some 25 years or so.

Next door, there is a coal yard, run by a Japanese.



The Nichi Bei Bussan store located at 1701 Post St., circa 1940

Then we find a barbershop (Asakura Barber Shop), whose owner is a tennis champion, an amateur, but well-known to lovers of that sport.

We next have a hotel, half rooming house (Nankaiya Hotel, owned by Heitaro Hirano), catering to people returning to Japan, which arranges tickets for them and so forth.

Benkyodo is a confectionery store dealing in Japanese sweets. They say the Japanese eat beans in some form every day. This is true. The Japanese eat beans as a main dish. Beans are also served as a side dish and as a special treat — in soup and in candy. Also, when one is sick, beans become a convalescent food. Japanese eat bean cakes even as sweets, and in this form, beans are given as gifts.

Last year, Benkyodo was under contract, and all the Japanese tea cakes sold at the Japanese concession at the Chicago Century of Progress World's Fair were made at that firm.

Mr. O. (Seiichi Okamura) has been in business for some 25 years, making this the oldest of the six confectionery firms in operation in Japan Town.

Moving on to the next building, the last on the south side of Geary, we find the Hokubei Hotel, a Japanese rooming house apartment. Mr. Y. also operates the (Nichibei Hotel) in Yokohama, and does a good business with his countrymen who visit San Francisco, traveling between Japan and the United States.

Now, crossing the street, we have the B.G. Garage, run by an American. Next to that is a laundry (Crown Tailors, owned by Kazuto Suenaga), a small one but quite busy, and then a

cleaning and dyeing establishment.

Next there is a beer parlor, which is a notorious place, and beside that, a transfer company. The (Shima Transfer and Drayage Co.) is run by Mr. S. (Hikichi Shimamoto) and his younger brother (George Gen-toku Shimamoto), an architect, who is a college graduate and specializes in Japanese architecture. Then come some flats, occupied by Negroes and a few Japanese.

Continuing on Geary Street from Buchanan Street, going down toward Fillmore Street, we have a Japanese daily on one corner, and G.'s (George's) Candy Kitchen on the other.

The New World is one of three Japanese newspapers in San Francisco. Their staff is composed of some 15 people, and it is one of the oldest Japanese newspapers published on the Pacific Coast. It is said that the New World is operating at a loss and the staff is very much underpaid. Too much competition between the three dailies is responsible for their difficulty.

George's Candy Kitchen is operated by Mr. L., a second-generation man of about 34. He has been in business for about three years, and is the only manufacturer of (Western) candy among the Japanese.

Going down that side of the street, next to the Candy Kitchen we find a pool parlor, a bungalow occupied by an American, and a barbershop (Otawa Barber Shop). There is also a Japanese restaurant where parties are held, and drinks in the form of Japanese sake are served by waitresses. It is the equivalent of a nightclub, with wine, women and song. They have been

pretty hard hit by the Depression.

Next door, there is a bird store. According to the newspapers, this establishment was taken over by narcotics agents, who uncovered a dope cache there. This led to the subsequent discovery of a dope ring in San Francisco.

Adjacent to the bird store are two residences, then the Hokubei Asahi News office, the structure of which was, until recently, a funeral home. The Hokubei Asahi is staffed entirely by former Japanese-American News — another vernacular daily — workers, who walked out on strike some years ago.

Rows of tenement houses come next, then a tailor (Inouye Tailor, owned by Shujiro Inouye), a fishing rod store (Henry's Tackle Shop), and a few more flats, down to Webster Street, where the Japanese district ends a block short of Fillmore Street.

There is a restaurant (Ace Restaurant), run by a Japanese, which caters to the Negroes and a few whites, and then a seed store (Oriental Seed and Plant Co.) on the same side of the street. Until recently, a hotel was operated by a Japanese on the corner of Webster and Geary streets, but it went broke and closed up a few months ago.

Next door to the New World Daily News is a furniture shop (SK Furniture) dealing in old and new furniture of every type. Then comes a Chinese laundry, and next a drug store (Ogawa Drug Store).

A photographer occupies the upstairs of a sporting goods store (Sugiyama Co.). A person by the name of Mr. S. occupied and operated the photo studio until a few months ago. Mr. S. was

located there for some 20 years, and his exhibits of photo art gained quite a reputation and won him prizes in exhibits all over the world. It was both a hobby and a business with him. He recently returned to Japan with his wife to go into business there.

The present man is a young man (Kazuo Wakasa), recently married and industrious and, as successor to Mr. S.'s business, (Wakasa Photo) does quite well.

From there on down toward Webster Street, there are rows of flats occupied mainly by Japanese of the working class.

At the end of the street there is a chimney shop, a Negro church, a restaurant, a Japanese fencing gymnasium and a grocery store.

POST STREET

Now, let's go one block north and start from Fillmore Street, going eastward up Post Street for four blocks to Octavia Street.

Starting at the south side, we find, in order, the G-K Shoe Store, a Chinese chop suey restaurant, an auction house, a sewing machine shop (Mikado Dressmaker), a Filipino barber shop and a pool hall... Upstairs is a "shady" hotel (Nishikawa Rooming, owned by Sutejiro Nishikawa), with its unmistakable red sign reading "Rooms," and then a vacant lot full of stranded wrecks of old cars.

Next, we have another one of the "shady" places. Then there are two flats and a bootblack shop...

Back to the corner of Webster Street, we have a fish bait store, operated by Mrs. S. as a side business, dealing in sardines used as bait by the local fishermen. Mr. S. works in a laundry.

Next there stands a cleaning establishment, then a carpentry shop, and another Japanese restaurant specializing in parties. They serve, as the house specialty, fresh eel-fish every time (a ship) comes in from Japan. "Those snake-like fish — not for me," some cry, but they are simply delicious. The structure next door is a hotel...

There is a fish store (Soko Fish Market, operated by Kichiro Murai and legally owned by son Hajime) in the next building, which does a thriving business. Two flats follow, then apartments, with a pool parlor (Yamato Pool Hall, owned by Hidesaburo Hidemitsu), an employment agency (Hori Employment Agency, owned by Sojiro Hori) and a coffee shop (Nisei Grill) below them.

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tsuwa Tei), a chop suey house (King Inn), a camera and picture frame store (Midzuho Photo Supply), a printing shop (Toyo Printing), a doctor's office (Dr. Minasada Kiyo-su), two barbers (Futatsuki Barber Shop and Suzuki Barber Shop), a bath-house (Kikuno Baths), a confectionery store (Shinanoya, owned by Shinjiro and Masa Hosoda), a sweet shop (Willy's Sweet Shop, owned by Willy Ito), and a drug store (Taisho Drug) on the corner.

Crossing the street, on the other corner of Post Street, is an optical office operated by a young Japanese American. Next door is a pharmacy (Misawa Drug, owned by Sawaji Misawa), operated by a woman who is a registered pharmacist.

A sukiyaki restaurant (Kikusui Restaurant), a flat, a midwife's office (Murayama Maternity), a flat again, a hotel with a securities office (Nichibei Se-

curities, owned by Kenji Kasai) below, and a soy bean and noodle factory below that.

Next door is a cash grocery, carrying both Occidental and Oriental merchandise with low prices to keep the shopper from going to nearby Fillmore shopping district to purchase things. Of course, that is the main problem of merchants who have stores dealing mainly with Occidental goods.

Next door to the grocery is a flat with a beer parlor (Tiger Cafe) below. One of the two large Japanese book stores (Aoki Taisei-Do, owned by Michitsugu Aoki) occupies the next structure. A chop suey restaurant (Showa Low), now closed due to bad times, is located upstairs. It used to be owned by a Japanese who employed Chinese help.

Next there is a dentist, another beer parlor (Sushi Gen), two flats, a chop suey restaurant (Soo Chow), a fish market (Uoki, owned by Kitaiichi Sakai), a drug store (Nippon Drug, owned by Hatsuto "Jim" Yamada) and a book store (Gosha Do, owned by Shoroku Ono) located on the corner of Buchanan.

From Laguna Street to Octavia are mainly flats — all Japanese. Here are the businesses located there: a drug store (Osaka Drug) on the corner, a grocery store (Nakai Co.), a motor repair shop (Pacific Motor & Battery), a carpentry shop (Arima and Sakaguchi). The two other flats are a soybean factory (Norio Co.) and an insurance company (Shoroku Ono).

See Walk

(Continued on page 2)

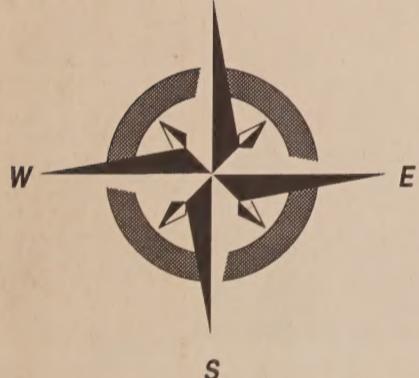


Buddhist Church of San Francisco, circa 1926



George's Candy Kitchen located at 1600 Geary St., circa 1935

San Francisco — Japanatown — 1935



SUPPLEMENT PAGE 2

HOKUBEI MAINICHI

Sunday, January 1, 1989



Southeast corner of Sutter and Buchanan streets, circa 1940

Walk

ance office

On the other side of the street we have a bakery, a cleaner's (Post Suit Cleaning, owned by Risaku Enomoto), and a laundry (Violet Laundry), a shade store, a barber (Ebisu Barber Shop, owned by Kanichi Katayama), and a bath house.

and a bath house. That winds up the two main streets. The others are Sutter Street and Bush Street, with Laguna, Buchanan and Webster streets crossing them. We shall now look briefly at these streets, in order to see what makes up the Japanese colony.

SUTTER STREET

Sutter Street, from Fillmore to Webster, has few Japanese stores or residences. There is a Japanese cleaners and an alley — running between Sutter and Bush — called Cottage Row, mostly occupied by Japanese.

The next block, from Buchanan to Laguna, is a bit more densely populated by the Japanese. On the north side, from the Buchanan Street corner, we have a hotel (Kumamotoya Hotel), a dentist (Dr. Carl Hirota, DDS), flats, a grocery (Watana-

The flats are of medium rent and are generally occupied by middle class people. That is all of the Japanese on that block.

The next block, between Webster and Buchanan, is also scarce of Japanese residents. On the north side, there is a YWCA structure—a newly constructed building, done in a Japanese architectural style. There is a hotel (Omiya) next door, a grocery store (Omiya Co.), and a few flats where Japanese are tenants.

On the other side of the street, we have an art repairing shop (Mizuhara Bros. Art Repair), a dentist (Dr. Shozo Fujita, DDS) and a candy store (Y.T. Candy Shop). The rest of the buildings are flats, which are occupied by tenants.

are flats, which are occupied by Japanese, Negroes and a few Filipinos.

The next block, from Buchanan to Laguna, is a bit more densely populated by the Japanese. On the north side, from the Buchanan Street corner, we have a hotel (Kumamotoyama Hotel), a dentist (Dr. Carl Hirota, DDS), flats, a grocery (Watana-

store), a tailor (Sutter Home) laundry, a jiu-jitsu gymnasium (Soko Judo Dojo), a high school students' club and a hotel (Shuhu Hotel) on the corner.

On the south side of the block, on Laguna Street, we have a

On Laguna Street, we have a garage (Arrow Garage) on the corner, flats and the new home of the Japanese American News, one of the leading Japanese dailies on the West Coast. Following that building, there are flats

that building, there are flats, Japanese language institutes (Kōpon Gakuin), more flats, a photo studio (Moriyama-Do, owned by Saburo Moriyama) on the corner of Buchanan and the block between Laguna and Octavia is evenly divided between Japanese and Caucasians.

BUSH STREET

Bush Street, from Fillmore to Octavia, is also limited. The

hereabouts, is here on this block. With the exception of three families, that block is mostly Japanese.

The last block (of Bush Street) between Laguna and Octavia streets is mostly Japanese, with the exception of two Caucasian families, the S. Drug Store and

families, the S. Drug Store and Green's Eye Hospital.

Buddhists have only recently secured this edifice, and are now trying to subscribe new members. Movies are shown, and lectures held there as well, in order to help defray expenses.

PINE STREET

Pine Street, between Gough and Fillmore, is about equally divided between Caucasians and



Above, a view from Laguna Street looking west down Post Street in 1940. Below, the same view in 1988.

Afterword

By LANE HIRABAYASHI

Dr. Paul Radin (1883-1959) was a world-renowned anthropologist. He was affiliated with many prestigious universities, among them UC Berkeley, University of Chicago, Fisk, Cambridge (England), Kenyon College, Black Mountain College, and Brandeis, where he held a chair in the Department of Anthropology until his death.

During the Depression years of the 1930s, Dr. Radin was engaged in two research projects. One of these was editing the massive Adolf Sutro collection.

In the same productive decade, he supervised and edited a large study focusing on ethnic minorities in the San Francisco Bay Area.

This project was funded by the State Emergency Relief Administration of San Francisco and Alameda counties. Its purpose was to document the cultural adjustment and contributions of no less than 12 different Third World and Caucasian minority groups to the city of San Francisco.

Unique for its time and massive in scope, the Survey of Ethnic Minorities in the San

Francisco Bay Area was perfectly in keeping with Radin's ongoing interest in the impact of American society on ethnic peoples.

From a number of descriptions, we know that Radin's approach in carrying out this study was both socio-historical and ethnographic. In terms of the latter method, special emphasis was put upon the collection of materials concerning beliefs, customs and oral tradition, as well as life histories. This was consistent with Dr. Radin's approach to ethno-history in general, and constituted his basic method throughout his academic career.

The Japanese American materials appear to have been collected in 1934 and 1935. Not much is known about this phase of the project. Two published articles based on the Japanese American part of the survey did appear in 1946, but presented only the barest outline of how and when the data were collected.

Unfortunately, no date or author's name appear on "A Walk Through San Francisco's Japantown, 1935." It was found — a plain manuscript without a title page — in the Ethnic Mi-

Hirabayashi teaches Asian American studies at San Francisco State University. He has reviewed JA-related books for the San Francisco Chronicle.



St. Francis Xavier Mission on the northwest corner of Pine and Octavia streets. Above, as it looked in the 1930s; below, as it looks today at the same location.



Residents of the Nankaiya Hotel and Apartment in a photo taken around 1916. The business was still operating two decades later.

Before and Beyond 1935: A Look at Some

With only a few exceptions, the businesses described in the 1935 study of San Francisco's Japantown are long gone.

Some businesses were never re-established after the World War II internment; some fell victim to the redevelopment of Japantown in the 1960s and '70s; still others relocated to another part of the city or outside of San Francisco.

The Hokubei Mainichi has attempted, with some assistance from our readers, to track down some of the businesses of the 1930s. While the following report is not exhaustive, we feel it is a representative sample.

WAKASA PHOTO STUDIO

Kazuo Wakasa was the industrious young man mentioned in the article and Thelma Wakasa was his new bride. According to Thelma, her husband had his photographs published in various publications nationwide.

"When we were evacuated to Arkansas," remembered Thelma, "we stored our belongings at the photo studio." While they were in the camp, word came that one night a truck pulled up to their studio and everything was taken.

Just before the war ended, a friend persuaded Kazuo to work in Chicago. The family followed him there after the war. They stayed there for nine years and then moved back to the Bay Area and opened a corner grocery store in Berkeley. Kazuo passed away several years ago.

Thelma fondly remembered her life with Kazuo, "We didn't have a lot of money, but we were happy."

TANIS SHOE REPAIR

The owner of the shoe repair store was Daigoro Tani. His son George, now a resident of Millbrae, remembers that when the evacuation orders came, his father stored his shoe repair equipment in the backyard barn of a life-long friend in San Francisco.

After the family came back from Topaz after the war, Daigoro retrieved his equipment from his friend and opened a shoe repair shop across the street from the 1935 location. He retired in the early 1960s.

SHIMA TRANSFER

The owner of the transfer and draying company was Hikoichi Shimamoto. The company started in 1932, said his wife Mary. It ceased operations due to the evacuation. Hikoichi was picked up by federal authorities in February 1942 and taken to Bismarck, N.D.

His brother George, an architect, had to handle the family's business matters. The company had to sell its trucks for about 10¢ on the dollar just before they were sent to Tanforan Assembly Center and then to Topaz. Hikoichi was reunited with his family about a year and a half later.

After the war, Hikoichi's family returned to Japantown and set up a makeshift shop in a little garage at 1844 Sutter St.,

NAKATA VEGETABLE STORE

Masaichi and Tomoko Nakata took over Nakata Vegetable Store when Masaichi's uncle, Kuraji Nakata, returned to Japan in 1928.

Masaichi would wake up early in the morning to go to the produce market to purchase the fresh fruits and vegetables he was to sell that day. "I remember it was always very dark when he left," recalls his daughter, Masako Kimoto.

While Masaichi would load up his truck for deliveries to his regular customers throughout the city, Tomoko would watch over the store on Post Street. As was typical of Japantown business owners in those days, the Nakatas lived behind the store.

The war would close the shop and send the family to Tule Lake and then to Topaz.

"We lost everything," said Kimoto, explaining why her parents were unable to reopen after the war. Her parents, she said, performed day work following their return.

NIPPON HOTEL

Yonekichi Tanaka opened the doors of the 50-room Nippon Hotel in 1919 on the corner of Post and Laguna.

The building, which ran almost half a block down Laguna from Post to Geyser, also housed Taisho Drug Store and Willy's Sweet Shop, recalls son Frank Tanaka. Frank, his brother and two sisters called the hotel home.

When evacuation orders came through, Yonekichi sold all the furniture before leaving for camp. The family did not own the building and thus lost the hotel to others.

The Tanakas did, however, own an apartment building on



Soko Fish Market circa 1937. Among those in the photo are proprietor Frank Murai (far left), Sam Furuichi (next to Murai), and Jack and George Mizon (center, under light).



Employees of Shima Transfer stand before the company's fleet of trucks at the San Francisco wharf. This composite picture was taken in 1940.

O'Farrell and Laguna, watched over by friends during the war. Following their return from camp, the family moved into their O'Farrell property, but never went back into the hotel business.

SHINANOYA CONFECTIONERY

Shinanoya Confectionery was started by Shinjiro and Masa Hosoda in the early part of the century and is now known as Hosoda Brothers, Inc. The store originally made and sold manju, sembei and other snacks and did a little importing, said Toshiko Hosoda, wife of Juro Hosoda, one of the sons of the original owners. The other son is Tokuchi.

The business continued until evacuation, said daughter Eiko Ono, who was born and raised in Japantown. "After the war, my father was quite old," she

recalls his daughter, Masako Kimoto.

While Masaichi would load up his truck for deliveries to his regular customers throughout the city, Tomoko would watch over the store on Post Street. As was typical of Japantown business owners in those days, the Nakatas lived behind the store.

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of the Businesses and People

over the Japantown business to his son-in-law, Eiji Yoshimura. "I was born in the hotel," said Yonebo Yoshimura, Eiji's son, adding that at that time the use of midwives was routine. The family of eight lived in the building until they were evacuated to Heart Mountain.

The Yoshimuras, who owned the hotel, had a couple run the business for the duration of the war, continued another of Eiji's sons, Sunao, who remembers those days well.

Upon their return from camp, they found the hotel in "shambles" and had to fix it up before opening for business.

When the redevelopment process began, "we were forced to sell the building to the redevelopment agency," said Yonebo. The former site of the Hokubei Hotel is "now just a parking lot" next to the Buchanan YMCA. "It tore my poor father's heart to see that building torn down. That was his life."

SOKO HARDWARE

Soko Hardware was originally Tsuchiya Trading Co., according to Mas Ashizawa, present owner of Soko Hardware. "Mr. Tsuchiya introduced the bamboo raku to the United States," said Ashizawa. "He made a killing off of that."

Ashizawa's parents, Masayasu and Naka, bought the store in 1925 and renamed it Soko Hardware. It closed due to the evacuation. Masayasu put all of the inventory in boxes and kept it in the basement of the building next door. While they were in camp, the basement was ransacked, said Mas.

The relocation authorities stored what was left of the inventory in a car dealership on Van Ness. Car dealerships, since they were not able to sell cars during the war, were used as government warehouses.

The family came back after the war and picked up the pieces — literally and figuratively. With the few Japanese items and nuts and bolts that were not taken by the looters, Soko Hardware set up shop at 1669 Post St. The store is now located on the corner of Post and Buchanan.

NAKAMURA TAILORS

Seichi George Nakamura operated his tailoring business on Laguna Street from the 1920s until the family's evacuation to Tanforan and Topaz.

The Nakamuras left camp for Chicago, where Seichi applied his trade in the shop of a



The Northeast corner of Post and Buchanan streets as it looked in 1940 (above) and as it does today.

hakujin tailor. In December 1948, the family returned to Japantown and lived on Buchanan Street above Evergreen Fountain. Seiichi continued to do alterations out of one of the rooms, recalls his daughter, Helen Ueda.

After the Nakamuras moved out of Japantown in the early 1950s, Seiichi continued his one-room operation until the 1960s, when he retired.

SOKO FISH MARKET

Soko Fish Market was legally owned by Hajime Murai, but was actually run by his father Kiichiro, according to Masai Murai, wife of Kiichiro's younger son Iwao "Ibo." Hajime was a minor in 1935, but the business had to be put under Hajime's name because Issei could not legally own land at the time.

Kiichiro retired in 1935 and sold the business to Sam Furuchi. The whereabouts of Furuchi could not be ascertained, but Masai said he is believed to be in Hawaii.

The Murai family was relocated to Heart Mountain.

KUMFAR LOW

Kumfar Low opened for business in Japantown in 1912, making it the second Chinese restaurant to open in the area. The restaurant was operated by the parents of Harry Wong, who is the owner of Wong's Bait and Tackle Shop, which is itself a long-time Japantown business.

Wong, who was born and raised in Japantown, said his family lived behind the restaurant. When his mother retired in 1950, Kumfar Low closed its doors. That same year, Wong opened his bait and tackle shop on Post Street near Yamato Garage, keeping the Wong business tradition in J-town alive and well.

DR. SHOZO FUJITA, DDS

Dr. Shozo Fujita began his dental practice in Japantown in 1912 and was there until his evacuation to Topaz. He put some of his dental equipment in storage, but decided to take other instruments with him, which allowed him to serve the dental needs of internees.

"He was one of the few dentists who took his instruments with him," said his daughter, Kathleen Date of Berkeley.

Following the war, he found his Japantown business location

ASAHI BARBER SHOP

Roy Abbey, today a ceramics teacher and volunteer at Kimchi Inc., came to Japantown in 1935 and took over Jimmy Fujisada's business, Asahi Barber Shop.

Residing on Hemlock Street behind his shop, Abbey continued to tend the heads of many a Japantown resident until his evacuation to Topaz. The owner of the building kept the shop intact for him during the war and even moved from the Marina District to the building on Laguna to keep a watchful eye over the property.

"I was very lucky," said Abbey. "I loved plants and had them in the shop, and they were still there when I got back (from camp)."

He returned in 1945 and renaming the shop "Roy's Barber Shop," opened for business right away.

Redevelopment caused him to move his business three times, with the last move to 1712 Laguna Street. He ran the shop until his retirement three years ago.

NICHI BEI BUSSAN

Holding the distinction of being one of the longest-running Japanese businesses in the city, Nichi Bei Bussan opened in 1902 on what is today Grant Avenue. Old-timers fondly remember it as Dupont Street.

Shojiro Tatsumo would see his dry goods store through many hardships, the first of which was the 1906 earthquake. The fire of that fateful day turned most of the city, including Tatsumo's store, to ashes.

Nichi Bei Bussan, or "NB" as it is affectionately called, made a couple of moves before settling into its Japantown home on the southwest corner of Post and Buchanan. The Tatsumo family lived on Buchanan, just a short jump from the shop.

Shojiro held an evacuation sale a few weeks before his forced removal to Topaz. After the war, the family moved back to their Buchanan Street home, which now doubled as a place of business.

In 1948, the family decided to expand their operations and opened a branch of the store in San Jose's Japantown.

In San Francisco, under the

first phase of redevelopment, Nichi Bei Bussan moved north on Buchanan. With the second phase, they moved again, this time across the street to its present location, where they continue to serve community folks and tourists alike.

JAPAN-AMERICA EMPLOYMENT AGENCY KINOKUNIYA HOTEL POOL HALL

Jennosuke and Taki Shiozaki were operating businesses in the South Park section of the city before moving their operations to Japantown in the 1920s. The couple ran the Japan-America Employment Agency, the Kinokuniya Hotel and a pool hall, all congregated in one location on Buchanan Street.

The businesses closed when evacuation orders came through. As the Issei could not own property then, the building was listed under son, Yoshi Edward. "During the war," said another son, Taki, "we rented out the building to a Filipino family."

And there was that unforgettable smell of her house, something indescribable. I think of it as being a mixture of coffee and toast and shoyu.

Some summers when we visited San Francisco, I got to sleep with my grandmother in her big bouncy bed surrounded by photographs of all her grandchildren and my aunts and uncles in all their wedding and family pictures.

Through her bedroom windows, I could hear the sounds of night life drifting up from the small bars across Post Street and the very early morning sounds of trucks pulling up to the grocery store below to deliver their produce.

My grandmother woke long before anyone else to her early morning bath, to light the fireplace and a stick of incense for the spirit of my grandfather, and to put the coffee on.

By the time I wandered down to find my grandmother busily crocheting another blanket, my uncles and aunts, who by now ran the grocery business, had probably all been through the kitchen and had started their busy day downstairs.

I would follow my grandmother out the back kitchen door and downstairs to the tiny grocery, small narrow rows of shelves stacked with Japanese canned and dried goods, sembei of every variety, fresh produce, fish and seafood and tofu.

My Aunt Chiyo might be behind the fish counter, always smiling cheerfully, while Uncle Eiji showed me the tentacles on a slimy octopus and my older cousins hustled in and out, stacking and filling shelves.

I would wind around the busy commotion after my grandmother to the cereals, where she'd remove the one I liked, then

NIPPON DRUGS

Nippon Drugs was started in the late '20s by Hatsuto "Jim" Yamada. During the evacuation, he sold the store, recalled his son Min. The family was interned at Topaz. Hatsuto left the camp in 1943 to work at a mail-order house in Chicago.

After the war, the family moved back to Japantown and started a drug store at the corner of Sutter and Laguna. "He couldn't very well call it Nippon Drugs' back in 1945," said Min. So it was renamed Jim's Drugs. The drug store is now run by brothers Min and Kan and is located in the Japan Center.

NANKAIYA HOTEL & APT.

The Nankaiya Hotel & Apartment was originally owned by Sendo Fukushima, according to his daughter, Yoneko Suehiro. The 42-room building was actually three houses joined together and was converted to a hotel/apartment building shortly after the 1906 earthquake.

Fukushima sold the business in 1930 to Heitaro Hirano, who hailed from the city of Wakayama, Wakayama Prefecture. Hirano operated the hotel until the evacuation. After the war, he started a travel agency on Post Street.

OMIYA HOTEL & GROCERY STORE

Shokichi Morino started his business in South Park on Third and Bryant around 1912, according to his son Ginzo "Babe" Morino. The business moved to its Japantown location on Sutter Street, where the Kyoto Inn is today, in 1934.

When the war broke out, the family moved from San Francisco, which was in restricted zone A, to Lodi, which was in restricted zone B. But the government "caught up with the B group and put them all in an assembly center in Stockton," recalled Morino. The family was then sent to the Rohwer camp in Arkansas.

The family still owned the three-story building, and Ginzo, while on emergency furlough from the service, "tried to store most of the stuff in one of the rooms." But someone later

occupied by residents and reopened his practice in Berkeley, where he continued until his death in 1958.

My grandparents, Tei and Kitaichi Sakai, opened a small grocery store on Post Street in San Francisco sometime after the great earthquake at the beginning of this century.

They lived above the store and raised nine children in one of those old Victorian houses that was carted away several years ago.

I have fond memories of that old house with its high ceilings, long staircases and curling bannister, the tall mirrors framed in bronze Grecian women with flowing hair and cornucopias and the matching fireplace, which was always stoked with coal and a glowing fire.

In that same setting were teak cabinetry filled with Japanese dolls, dishes and bibelots, butsudan, Japanese kakejiku and prints on the walls, low-hanging Japanese lanterns for light, Japanese pillows and magazines and my grandmother's endless handiwork in the form of crocheted blankets.

And there was that unforgettable smell of her house, something indescribable. I think of it as being a mixture of coffee and toast and shoyu.

Some summers when we visited San Francisco, I got to sleep with my grandmother in her big bouncy bed surrounded by photographs of all her grandchildren and my aunts and uncles in all their wedding and family pictures.

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NIPPON GOLD FISH

Tayagawa Murata opened Nippon Gold Fish in 1911 on the corner of Sutter and Buchanan. In 1935, it was at its second location at 1919-1921 Bush St. The family first rented, then owned the property, where they had a retail store and a shop where they built aquaria.

Evacuation closed the doors of their business, but following the war, they reopened at the same location with Tayagawa now retired and son Koji and daughter-in-law Mary taking over.

In the 1960s, redevelopment saw Nippon Gold Fish find a new location in the Richmond District, where it continues today. Koji retired in the late '70s, and the business is now in the hands of third-generation Muratas, sons Ernest and Steven.

NIPPON DRUGS

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OMIYA HOTEL & GROCERY STORE

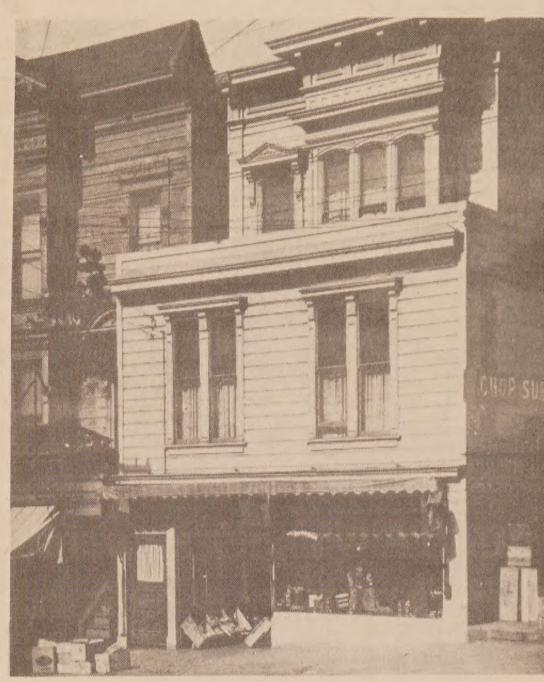
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Post Street

By KAREN TEI YAMASHITA



The Uoki grocery store around 1935. It was started by Tei and Kitaichi Sakai and is still run by that family.

pick up some bread and milk for my breakfast. She might even pick out the instant ochazuke mix she knew I loved.

By the time I knew my grandmother, she was a widow in her eighties, bent and worn. Her thinning white hair was neatly bound in a tiny bun at the back of her head. She had the protruding chin and lips that have always marked the members of our family.

She had a low, whimsical laugh to go with what I always supposed was her natural wisdom about life and her bemused sense of humor. Obaachan had seen everything; people were like that. Life had plans for us that we might never predict.

She spoke very little English and was always saying in Japanese that we were good children. All of her grandchildren were ii-ko. So I was at breakfast on Post Street, contentedly eating a bowl of cereal, followed by one of ochazuke, and Obaachan was there to say, "It's good for you."

Now she is gone, but when we get together as a big clan, I always remember Obaachan and that we are, every one of us, making meals for her big brood and all the store employees who came up for lunch.

My grandfather was busy tending his moyashi production and the profusion of rhododendrons and water lilies he had growing on the upstairs balcony. The older children were already working in the store while the younger ones were occupied with school.

The youngsters went to Rafael Weill Elementary School, which was named after the owner of the old, no longer existing White House department store.

In those days, the majority of students were Issei, and classmate Verlin Yamamoto's mother was the perennial PTA president because she was one of the few Issei women who spoke fluent English.

At the sixth grade graduation ceremony, the young graduates, my mother among them, all stood stiffly in a row while the principal, Mrs. Kahn, came by to give each child a farewell kiss.

Every day after school, there was Japanese language school at Kinmon Gakuen around the corner on Bush Street, where Mits Kaneko's

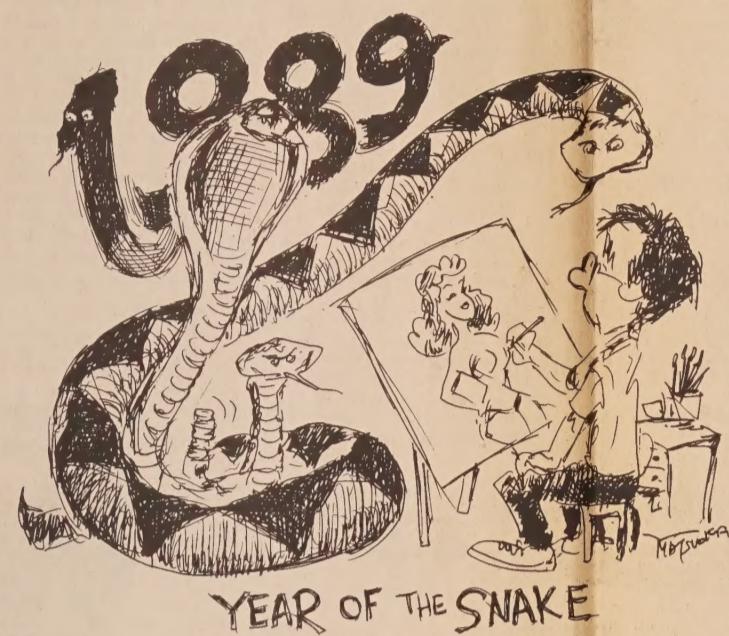
Happy New Year!

From Jack Matsuoka

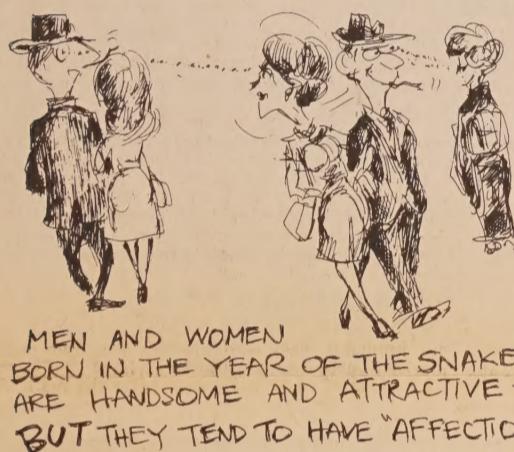
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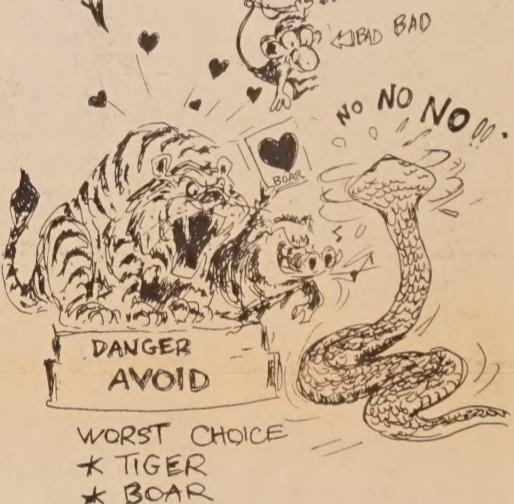
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ARE "BEAUTIFUL PEOPLE". NEVER LET THE
APPEARANCE FOOL YOU.



MEN AND WOMEN
BORN IN THE YEAR OF THE SNAKE
ARE HANDSOME AND ATTRACTIVE
BUT THEY TEND TO HAVE "AFFECTIONS"
OUTSIDE THEIR FAMILY.... RESULTING IN... "LOVE AT FIRST SIGHT" TO MARTIAL TROUBLES.



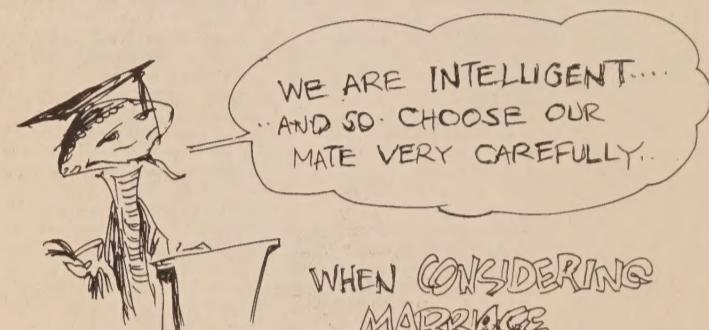
RAT, RABBIT,
DRAGON, SNAKE
HORSE, SHEEP
OR DOG



WORST CHOICE
★ TIGER
★ BOAR



THEY CAN BE REAL TIGHT WHEN APPROACHED
FOR A "LOAN"... BUT CAN BE MORE THAN GENEROUS
WHEN THEY BECOME SYMPATHETIC TO YOUR
FINANCIAL SITUATION.



WHEN CONSIDERING
MARRIAGE

Educational
(Continued from page 6)

been pretty desperate to do a thing like that..."

Even as he tried to be adult about the matter, Anne saw how deep the wounds were that had been inflicted. Peter and the young boys, she knew, would bear these livid marks as long as they lived, with repercussion on their issue.

The twist in the psyche that made for a Charles Hudachek — she could only conclude that there was diabolism at work (and if there was diabolism, she couldn't help thinking, was there not God?).

Mr. Hudachek was given a very light sentence, 90 days in the county jail. After due consideration, most of the mothers wouldn't allow their boys to testify in court; they felt the children had suffered enough already.

Some time later, a friend of Peter's dropped in to say hello to the Muras. He said he was in the area. Among his this and that, he said he had sighted Mr. Hudachek at a local Italian restaurant. Pretending to need a visit to the restroom, he said, he had walked by Mr. Hudachek's table and said, *sotto voce*, "Child molester . . ."

"He didn't look around, but I could tell he was shook up. When I go back from the restroom, he was gone."

After the young man left, Anne, going about her chores, sighed from time to time, knowing that Charles Hudachek was

out there somewhere, looking over the field.

Yamamoto's short stories, including one published in last year's Hokubei Mainichi holiday issue, have been published in *Seventeen Syllables and Other Stories (Kitchen Table: Women of Color Press, Latham, N.Y.)*. She is a 1986 recipient of the American Book Award for *Lifetime Achievement from the Before Columbus Foundation*. Her works have appeared in literary publications, Japanese American community newspapers, and anthologies of Asian American and minority literature.

"A Walk Through Japantown" appears courtesy of Mrs. Paul Radin. The material was prepared by Lane and James Hirabayashi and Mary Sacharoff-Fast Wolf.

Supplementary research was primarily done by Seizo Oka of the Japanese American History Room and Patty Wada.

Special thanks to the Hokubei Mainichi's Shigeo Yoshitsugu

and Yoshitomi Fukushima for allowing us to tap their memories of 50 years ago.

The map was designed by Patty Wada and produced by Julia Matisoo of Matisoo Editorial Services.

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As recreating Japantown of 1935 involved a certain degree of guesswork, we encourage readers to write to us at 1746 Post St., San Francisco, CA 94115 to give us corrections or additions.

"I know that. But what then? Eventually he's a pretty good teacher and a talented musician."

Peter was silent again, then he said, "You know, that stuff he pulled on me? He must have

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NIKKEI

GRIDIRON

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A Day to Remember

By TOM ARIMA

Years have passed since that eventful day in Sacramento. I remember it still, vividly, as if it were yesterday.

More than six months had passed since going to my sister's place in Sacramento. I had suffered a physical breakdown, due primarily to worry and overextending myself in community and church work, and had gone there from Chicago in a wheelchair, leaving my family back in Chicago.

And although I had recovered enough to get out of my wheelchair, I was still uneasy and terribly underweight.

The daily walks and the diet I was put on were strengthening me, and the easy-going lifestyle of my sister and her husband was a tonic. The love and care they gave me was certainly tremendous, speeding me to recovery. Their love, care and concern will never be forgotten.

The existence I led then was serene and peaceful, not harried or pressured like it was in Chicago. It was idyllic. It was the kind of life one could relish, grow fat on. It was lazy and pleasant. It was like being on a perpetual cloud; a long-needed vacation one always wanted, but couldn't really afford.

Perhaps the physical breakdown and the circumstances leading up to it were my body's way of telling me to slow down, to take it easy. But I hadn't listened. Now, it had made itself known in no uncertain terms. And I was cognizant of it and indelibly aware.

My family was writing regularly, especially my wife, but my boys, who were still in their teens, were somewhat sporadic. But they did write. They wrote all about what they were doing, inquiring what I was doing, how I was, when I was coming home, and all those kinds of things families usually ask, chit-chatting about seemingly trivial matters. But then, to me, they were important.

And when they didn't write, they would call, shortening the distance that separated us. But these phone calls, too, were trivial and mundane. Oftentimes I wondered why we couldn't say those words that are so easily said on television or in movies. Yet somehow they were never meant to be.

Getting back to that particular day, I hadn't heard from them for about a week or so and was getting concerned, worried and somewhat depressed. I wondered why they didn't write or call. Were they all right? Were they managing? Had something happened? Were they trying to keep something from me? Some difficulty — a disaster?

Being a worrywart didn't help, that was for sure, but falling into this trap was easy and natural for me, which was part of my problem. Waiting for a phone call or the mailman became an involuntary, debilitating ritual. Each morning, listening for the mailman and

the clang of the mailbox became an obsession.

It was raining slightly that day. I had already gone out to check the mailbox and had come in. Standing by the window looking out, I saw the misty rain falling but didn't really see it, my mind being focused on my family far away.

My sister and her husband had gone shopping. Gazing at the mailbox standing all alone by the curb, thoughts drifted through my mind chaotically like some weird kaleidoscope of blurred shapes and shadows. It was self-pity, of course, but it was warm and soothing.

Relishing the feeling for quite some time, it became quite evident, even to me, that the hole — or shall I say the pit — of self-pity was getting deeper and deeper.

Deliberately trying to snap out of it, yet still wanting to capture the warm, familiar feeling I felt, I took out my small notepad from my shirt pocket and wrote:

In misty spring rain
A mailbox stand, gray and wet
... and again empty

Walking to my room, the down feeling still persisted, permeating my thoughts. The feeling was unwanted now, but it had imprisoned my mind like some huge, hulking warden. Sitting on my bed, the colorful printed walls became hazy; clouded and veiled by my gloom. It seemed as if a conspiracy were in the offing, and words began to well of themselves:

Spring sun is breaking
But here in my lonely room
Clouds are drifting by ...

Looking out, in the far corner of the yard, I saw a bush standing all by itself, and wrote:

A thin dying bush
So forgotten now, not even
The wind touches it ...

Trying to free myself of these depressing thoughts I left the room and went to the front door. But to no avail. The depressing

thoughts followed:

Melancholy spring
I lean against the door-jamb
And listen to the rain ...

The gloom was feeding upon itself. Consuming everything. Devouring everything. It seemed insatiable and couldn't be stopped.

That afternoon a friend called. He suggested going up to Nimbus Dam, which was several miles northeast of Sacramento. It was a refreshing change of pace, and the rain had stopped, so we all decided to go: my sister, her husband, the friend and I.

The trip in itself was uneventful, but fun. It was filled with the chit-chat and laughter that is born only among people who are comfortable and at one with each other.

Nimbus Dam was wholesome and a wonderland: a scenic place with a river far below with a series of small concrete pools, each higher than the next, leading up like steps from the river to a large pond on top, where the salmon were kept. The pond was called, if I remember correctly, the spawning pond.

From the railing where we stood, we could see the salmon leaping the rapids far below, coming ever closer to the awesome concrete "ladder" they were soon to climb.

It was an impressive sight. A moving sight. One could feel the innate power of nature driving the salmon onward. The totality, the oneness of all things. The interdependence of all things. The survival of the fittest. The challenge. The test, nature's test, and the poignant drama of struggling — to overcome, to survive, to reproduce.

And too, the significance of obstacles and the need for inlets and lagoons. Bleeding and torn, the salmon rested in the big pond, gulping air heavily after completing their climb. As a memento, I picked up a rock. It was a small rock and it fit easily in my pocket.

That night in my room after everyone had gone to bed, I gazed upon the rock. It reawakened

the feelings I had experienced that day at Nimbus Dam. Reliving it, I felt it engulfing me, overwhelming me with an odd sense of awe — of realization. I took out my notepad and wrote:

In the bright sunshine
Salmons climbing their ladder
How they bleed to spawn ...

... and the words came flowing of themselves.

The rock, too, spoke to me of strength, of change and of oneness. I envisioned that it was once a part of a distant mountain, and traveling from place to place, being smoothed and sculpted by forces unknown to itself, it had come to Nimbus Dam — and now to this place, this table, and was resting now, there, temporarily.

It radiated strength and beauty all its own. And it was still changing, imperceptibly perhaps, but changing — resisting, yet flowing with change. Pick it up, I polished it and laid it back on the table next to my bed. I knew I would keep it forever.

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By GERI HANNA

The boys had called earlier that evening, making the day complete. Lying in bed, thoughts that drifted through my mind were no longer thoughts of gloom or self-pity, but of challenges, of mountains and rivers, of lagoons and flowers, and of horizons beyond.

Life was a challenge. A magnificent challenge. And obstacles were just tests, tests to grow on:

After the spring rain
A broken mirror in ditch
Glistens in the sun

So thinking, I closed my eyes — and the night drifted into sleep, unfettered and buoyant. It had been an epochal day.

Even now, remembering, I feel the imprints of that one momentous day.

Arima writes from El Cerrito.



SEKI·NIN (DUTY BOUND)

BY
GEORGE NAKAGAWA*Seki-Nin (Duty Bound)*

revolves around the plight of a young Japanese American man, Jiro Toyota, who is obliged to leave his native America only to be drafted into the Japanese Army in 1943.

The tragedy that novelist George Nakagawa depicts extends beyond these specific boundaries to encompass the fate of all children whose lives have been sacrificed on the altar of filial duty.

An interview with the author is appended to the novel.

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On August 10, 1988, the Civil Liberties Act was signed into law. It apologizes for the injustice of internment, evacuation, and relocation that was inflicted upon persons of Japanese ancestry during World War II; and it entitles many of them to a one-time payment of \$20,000. The Office of Redress Administration (ORA) has been established within the Department of Justice to identify and locate eligible individuals, and, when funds are authorized by Congress, to make payment.

By the time you read this, ORA expects to have located more than 30,000 of those who are eligible. Without the enthusiastic cooperation of many individuals and community groups, that achievement would not have been possible. But there is still much left to do. In addition to remaining eligibles, ORA must account for those who are deceased. Spouses, children, or parents of those who died on or after August 10, 1988, may also be eligible for payment. Thus, ORA continues to need the support of family members and friends to reach the entire Japanese American community—in all 50 states, in rural areas, in Japan, and around the world.

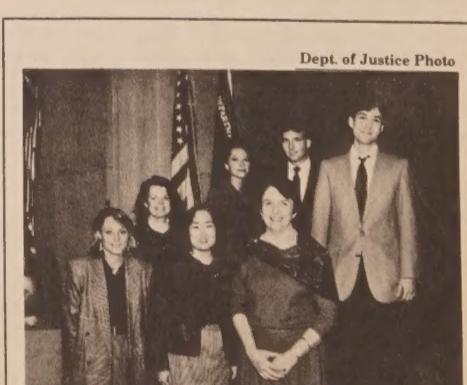
The ORA Voluntary Information Form is available at many community centers, churches, temples, and JACL regional offices. Or, you may contact ORA at:

P.O. Box 66260
Washington, D.C. 20035-6260
1-800-228-8375*
835-2094 in Washington, D.C.
8:30 a.m. to 8:30 p.m. EST
*Telephone Device for the Deaf:
1-800-548-0279; in D.C. 659-0213

The most helpful information is: name (including maiden, if any), date of birth, social security number, camps, assembly centers, or relocation centers, current address and phone number.

A bilingual staff is available to take your calls in Japanese or English. You need not submit information again if you have previously called or written the ORA. Because the National Archives has made its records available to us, it is not necessary to obtain verification from there. However, those who have already done so can expedite determination of their eligibility by submitting that verification along with their Voluntary Information Form.

The Administrator and staff of ORA extend best wishes for a happy and prosperous New Year.



Dept. of Justice Photo
The ORA staff members are: (left to right, back row) Valerie O'Brian, Shirley Lloyd, Bob Bratt, Bill Kiyoshi Dwyer; (front row) Marygrace Jennings, Cheryl Watanabe, Alice Kale.